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President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 164 (*continued*)

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/871)

Mr. Theron (Namibia): I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of the Southern African States, namely, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We are about to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and simultaneously we find ourselves at the threshold of a new millennium. It is an appropriate moment to reflect and take stock on how far we have come in giving credence to the aims and objectives of the Charter. This is a period of great hope and confidence in the efficacy of the United Nations. The time is therefore quite appropriate for a new vision and foresight.

We are most grateful for this timely opportunity to participate in this very important debate. I therefore want to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General for his frank, analytical and comprehensive report on the causes of conflict in Africa and for the valuable recommendations for the prevention and resolution of social conflicts, as well as the proposals to ensure durable peace and sustainable development. Only a true son of Africa with wisdom and vision, like the Secretary-General, could so accurately and extensively report on the situation as it currently exists in our continent.

As stated in the report, the challenges which face the African continent, and their scope, cannot be discussed only in the Security Council. Hence the General Assembly, as well as the other components of the United Nations system, has also been tasked with discussing and implementing as appropriate the relevant recommendations contained in the report. This leaves us with an ideal opportunity to ensure that the expectations of "We the peoples" are met by further enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations.

We all know that economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflicts and that stability is closely linked to development. The Secretary-General therefore rightly emphasized the actions required — such as democratization, good governance and sustainable development — that would, if carried out, bring about durable peace and promote economic growth. The reality, however, is that official development assistance to Africa has been drastically reduced over the past few years. The impact of this decrease in resources considerably contributes to the inability of the continent to become self-sufficient. In order to support development policies in Africa, development assistance should be maintained and increased.

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We wish to highlight particularly the importance of ensuring that women form part and parcel of all efforts towards conflict-resolution and sustainable development. The problems are numerous, but we have to ensure that equality between women and men becomes a fact of life, as this would set the stage for so much more to come.

The Secretary-General stated that Africa could not depend solely on the developed world for assistance. He also stated that the international community must show political will by taking concrete actions that would help to realize the objectives of advancing Africa's development priorities. In the same vein, we have time and again called on the Western creditors to write off Africa's external debt. This deed would be viewed as an exercise of concrete political commitment to assist and complement Africa's efforts to forge ahead with its own development. After all, Africa today remains underdeveloped and suffers the most in an unstable international economic environment. The developed world should therefore continue to cultivate a more equitable and fair trade partnership with the developing world.

In this regard, the Southern African region is working hard towards regional economic cooperation and integration. Several successful initiatives have been undertaken to consolidate these efforts under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Unfortunately, despite these positive developments, old and new conflicts are still part of our everyday lives.

Another important factor that could greatly contribute to alleviating some of our problems is the continued provision of post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation. One can understand the concerns about the high costs involved in these exercises, but it should be obvious that the advantages of securing peace and stability far outweigh the costs of such exercises. Too often, frail, newly created peace initiatives are left alone, just to deteriorate into a war situation again.

Our region has closely followed the deliberations of the Security Council on this item. We have noted the positive responses by the Council members that left us with a sense of optimism for the future. They expressed willingness to assist in addressing the problems identified by promising to make the proposed solutions work and by strengthening cooperation on a number of issues. This positive attitude should give an impetus to our efforts to cooperate in a spirit of partnership.

We believe that peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building should remain high priorities for all of us. It is hoped that the outcome of these deliberations on the root causes of conflict in Africa will contribute to ensuring long-term stability, peace and sustained growth and development.

We have the unenviable responsibility to prevent when and where necessary the escalation of further conflicts within our region, and more so when called upon to do so by legitimate Governments. These interventions are necessary to prevent massive human suffering and further destabilization and to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. This requires close cooperation and collaboration among regional and subregional organizations that should be supported and promoted by the international community.

Finally, the Southern African region recommends that the General Assembly adopt measures that would ensure that the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report are implemented. Furthermore, we propose that the Assembly remain seized of this matter and that progress be reviewed on a regular basis.

Mr. Mochochoko (Lesotho): Lesotho fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Burkina Faso and Namibia on behalf of the African Group and of the southern African region, respectively.

I begin by paying tribute to the Secretary-General for his keen interest in the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa and for his focused and comprehensive report on the causes of conflict in Africa.

I also wish to express Lesotho's gratitude to the Secretary-General for the interest he has shown regarding the situation in Lesotho. We are encouraged by the special interest and concern shown by the Secretary-General, and indeed by the international community, regarding developments in Lesotho. It is our hope that the Secretary-General and the international community will continue to be actively involved in support of Lesotho's efforts to consolidate peace and prevent the recurrence of armed confrontation through assistance in areas which will facilitate the rapid re-establishment of income-generating activities as a means of laying a solid foundation for the development of our country.

Over the last year, the issues of peace and security in Africa have dominated the agenda of the Security

Council. On 25 September 1997, an unprecedented meeting of the Council was convened at the ministerial level to review the state of the African continent and to consider appropriate concerted international action to promote peace and security there. As the Secretary-General pointed out this morning, in April he submitted to the Security Council his report on the causes of conflict in Africa in an effort to accelerate the settlement of conflicts and to promote peace and development on the continent. After its deliberations, the Council recognized that achieving peace and security in Africa is a continuous process; the Council therefore resolved to continue to assess progress in promoting peace and security in Africa at the level of foreign ministers on a biennial basis.

We welcome the Security Council's endorsement in resolution 1170 (1998) of the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard, the aim of which, we believe, is the continued in-depth examination of the causes of conflicts in Africa with a view to promoting durable peace and development in all parts of the continent. The Secretary-General's proposal on holding Security Council meetings at the summit level every five years is commendable and deserves the support of the Assembly.

As the Secretary-General's report indicates, each year one in four countries in Africa experiences conflicts, and Africa accounts for half of the worldwide deaths from conflicts. The sources of these conflicts are attributed to both internal and international dimensions. It is for these reasons that joint African and international concerted efforts and coordinated contributions are essential to settle these conflicts and eliminate their causes. More importantly, Africa has to demonstrate the will to use other, alternative means of dispute settlement rather than resort to the use of force to settle conflicts. We remain confident that the majority of African women and men are still eager to expend their time, energy and creativity on the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development through dialogue.

The recent sad experience in Lesotho has taught us that violence cannot be the basis for asserting one's viewpoint, nor can it help solve disputes. As we embark on the social and economic reconstruction of our country, we are acutely aware that dialogue must be the basic two-way instrument in solving problems.

We agree with the Secretary-General's assertion that, even though the primary responsibility for matters of peace and security lies with the United Nations, support for regional and subregional initiatives is both necessary and desirable in view of the fact that the United Nations lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa. The contagious results of events such as occurred in Lesotho call for a much more concerted effort by regional organizations in the promotion and resolution of conflicts. In this regard, we commend the efforts of subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in quelling dissidents in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and recently in Lesotho. These efforts strengthen our view that wherever possible, the international community should strive to complement rather than supplant Africa's efforts to resolve Africa's problems.

We therefore support stronger collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa, which in our view is essential for dealing with some of the conflict situations in Africa. The recent meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations on this issue is thus commendable. We are also encouraged by Security Council actions to help strengthen support for regional and subregional initiatives as well as to enhance coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace.

The Secretary-General is right in pointing out that high among those who profit from conflicts in Africa are international arms merchants. The proliferation of small arms continues to pose a serious threat to human security, not only in Africa but the world over. Better control measures will be required to counter this proliferation. As the Working Group created pursuant to Security Council resolution 1170 (1998) has rightly said, the flow of arms, ammunition and explosives into Africa's tensest regions is an area where the international community could quickly make a great deal of difference. Among initiatives that can be taken in this regard are support for Africa's efforts to build social cohesion, restoring the authority and legitimacy of States as providers of safety and security, and enhancing African societies' capacity to dialogue on security issues in order to minimize the need for these weapons.

We urge all those who sell arms and assist their proliferation into conflict areas, particularly in Africa, to take the necessary measures aimed at curtailing the threat posed by arms flows. We also urge the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to take immediate steps aimed at monitoring the accumulation

and transfer of small arms into conflict areas. In this regard, efforts by the Security Council aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Council are steps in the right direction.

It is evident that the scourge of conflicts in Africa undermines efforts towards economic and social development of the continent. The Secretary-General's report clearly shows the intrinsic linkage between peace and development. The challenge before the international community is thus to work towards the achievement of peace and development in Africa. We reiterate the hope that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other relevant bodies of the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and other relevant organizations as well as Member States will consider the Secretary-General's report and its recommendations, and take action as they deem appropriate within their respective areas of competence.

Finally, as Africans, we are naturally perturbed by the recent increase in the number of conflict situations in Africa: the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the stalled peace process in Angola; the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea; continued violence in Sierra Leone and the exacerbation of conflict between Somalia and Sudan, to mention a few, are all causes of concern to us. We appeal to all parties to these conflicts to summon the necessary political will and rise to the challenge of giving peace a new momentum. It is our hope that the international community will continue to rally behind Africa's tireless efforts to find lasting peace, stability and development for the region. Africa's quest for making peace, maintaining peace and building sustainable peace can be achieved through strengthening the United Nations capacity to prevent conflict, to respond rapidly when conflicts erupt and to be able to provide post-conflict peace-building instruments.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): I am speaking on behalf of the eastern African subregion, comprising 12 countries — the Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and my own country, Tanzania — in support of the statement made by Burkina Faso on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and in the anticipation of that to be made later by Nigeria, which has the chairmanship of the African Group for October.

The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa is our major preoccupation. We have commended the Secretary-General for an insightful report on sources of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent and address those conflicts, and how to lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth following their resolution. Allow me to reiterate those sentiments once again.

The gravity of the situation in Africa is self-evident from a cursory examination of the agenda of the Security Council. Africa dominates that agenda. The concerns of the Security Council in exploring practical ways to prevent, reduce and resolve conflicts in Africa were therefore both legitimate and necessary. But significantly, there have been few solutions to the conflicts because the root causes have not been addressed.

It is, however, true that the causes of conflict in Africa are not unique. The conflicts in Africa are not conflicts only because their causes are African. They are conflicts most significantly because, like anywhere else, the pervasiveness of abject poverty engenders frustrations, instability and conflict. Indeed, there can never be real peace where injustice abounds.

The Secretary-General pointed the way. The key to the resolution of conflicts in Africa and in all regions lies in meaningfully addressing the problems of development. Indeed, in presenting his report to the Security Council, the Secretary-General rightly observed that

> "it is the persistence of poverty that is impeding the full promise of peace for all of Africa's peoples. The alleviation of poverty must be the first aim of our efforts. Only then — only when prosperity and opportunity become real — will every citizen, young or old, man or woman, have a genuine and lasting stake in a peaceful future for Africa — politically, economically and socially." (*S/PV.3871, p. 4*)

Africa, composed of 53 States, remains the poorest region in the world. Of the 48 least developed countries in the world, 33 are in Africa. Africa's poverty is further exacerbated by pressures of debt servicing, which accounts for one third of these countries' export earnings; deteriorating terms of trade; declining official development assistance; falling commodity prices; increasing protectionism; and the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes. Needless to say, such an environment attracts very little foreign direct investment. It is apparent, therefore, that the cake available to meet Africa's needs is a very small one. And it is no wonder there are many conflicts in the continent.

It is in this regard that we welcomed the initiative of the Security Council and the report of the Secretary-General on Africa. Indeed, when the report was first discussed in the Security Council, there was unanimity that, while Africa bore primary responsibility for dealing with the challenges it faced, the challenge was such that Africa was incapable of facing it alone. It is in this context that we express the hope that specific and deliberate measures will be taken to transform the Secretary-General's recommendations into a workable strategy for real and meaningful change in Africa. In doing so, we need to bear in mind the World Bank's 1997 assessment of the situation:

> "Social indicators remain below those of other regions; fiscal deficits are high and domestic savings low; aid dependency remains high; private investment and foreign direct investment levels, though beginning to improve, are low; and there is a significant unfinished agenda in areas such as the financial sector, public expenditure management, and privatization." (*The World Bank Annual Report 1997*)

It is a very bleak picture indeed.

In Washington the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have just concluded. Warnings about impending global economic crisis and recession have been given. The stakes for Africa are therefore even higher. The Bank's President is reported to have expressed concern that too little attention was being paid to the growing ranks of the unemployed and the risks of undercutting political stability. The poor, he warned, cannot wait. I would add that a hungry individual without shelter cannot appreciate exhortations on human rights. That individual's human rights are violated several times over. Thus gullibility becomes a weapon of survival to the detriment of Africa. We commend Mr. Wolfensohn for his call to focus on sustainable development and on social issues. The warning he gave in his 6 October address to the Board of Governors is apt:

> "We must do all this. Because if we do not have the capacity to deal with social emergencies, if we do not have longer-term plans for solid institutions, if we do not have greater equity and social justice, there will be no political stability."

Africa is in a state of emergency. The result of well-meant programmes such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative of the Bretton Woods institutions has proved disappointing. And yet Africa continues to face a crippling debt burden at a time when the global economic outlook is not full of promise. And it is in Africa that both the Bank and the international community are most needed.

One of the dangers resulting from the prospect of a global economic slowdown is an increased tendency by States to be inward looking. It is our hope that our shared concern about our common humanity will drive us to overcome destructive tendencies towards isolationism. At this moment of trial, Africa needs a global partnership, a partnership that would allow it to use and fully live up to the promise and aspirations of its people, the United Nations and, indeed, the international community.

It is also in this regard that we wish to take the opportunity to especially commend those Governments that have either taken or promised to take the necessary steps towards debt cancellation for African countries, and particularly the least developed among them. We should also express our appreciation to the donor countries for their commitment to Africa. Our special gratitude goes to the Netherlands and the Nordic countries for having attained the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. They are standard bearers for any undertaking this Organization is committed to. We also recognize and appreciate Japan's initiatives on African development based on new partnerships. The second Tokyo International Conference on African Development is scheduled to convene in Tokyo in less than a fortnight's time.

There are countries such as Tanzania that have not experienced the kind of conflicts that have bedevilled Africa and yet are not immune from the effects of tension and strife elsewhere. Conflicts have been sources of uncontrollable influxes of refugees. These have occasioned untold human suffering to both the refugees and the host countries. While refugees deserve and desperately need help, so do the host countries, which have to cope with an unbearable burden with very limited resources, and experience considerable destruction to the environment. The United Republic of Tanzania — host to over 300,000 refugees, a number that is growing as a result of the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi — is particularly concerned about the level of international commitment to the burden it bears. We therefore continue to make a special appeal for support — for it is not uncommon to read reports on contributions to refugees that are silent about the great sacrifice that is being made by the host countries.

In conclusion, I should like to express the wish of my subregion, and indeed of Africa, that all hope is not lost. It will therefore be reassuring if this Assembly adopts under this agenda item a resolution that seeks to implement the twin goals of peace and security, on the one hand, and development on the other. This, we believe, is the challenge the report of the Secretary-General has set us. Indeed, what Africa needs are not handouts, but the wherewithal for meaningful development. Consequently, investments in human capital, physical infrastructure, such as roads and railways, the provision of credit, and access to markets — to mention but a few critical elements — can speed up the positive changes that have been the hallmark of the last five years.

Africa is ready to move forward. What is required is a new, genuine partnership based on mutual respect and predicated on the premise that Africa needs to be taught how to fish and not to receive shiploads of fish.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): In the past few years the Security Council agenda has been crowded with problems relating to Africa. Last April the Secretary-General took a bold step in producing a report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". It is fitting that we should be considering this well-thought-out report.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his landmark document, which brings many ideas and approaches to the range of problems and opportunities in the continent of Africa. To be sure, through this document the Secretary-General has neatly put Africa's problems in their proper perspective. He has rightly identified the fact that the sources of Africa's problems lie in both diverse and complex internal and external interactions. He has also made far-reaching recommendations on which action by the United Nations is urgently required.

The fact that the Assembly today is considering agenda item 164 on Africa underlines the international community's growing concern about the need to establish conditions amenable to peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. It is common knowledge that Africa, in the overall global framework, is lagging behind in economic development and is facing the stark realities of marginalization as compared to other continents. The reason for this situation lies in the severe socio-economic and political problems that confront Africa.

The countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have not only continued to face the age-old problem of Angola; the new conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has also further complicated and enlarged the region's area of concern for peace and security.

The situation in Angola has continued to deteriorate, despite the international community's patience and its efforts to bring Africa's oldest civil conflict to an end. Zambia is concerned that the hopes for peace and stability, as envisaged in the Lusaka Protocol, have not so far been realized. The reason for this lies squarely at the door of Jonas Savimbi, who has refused to abide by his obligations under the Lusaka Protocol. We have already gone a long way down the road to peace. Neighbouring countries and the United Nations have invested considerable effort and resources in the search for peace in Angola. We cannot afford now to abandon the Angolan people, who have suffered so much and whose hopes were pinned on the Lusaka Protocol. We hope, therefore, that in spite of the setbacks, the international community, through the Security Council, will reassert its authority and use its immense wisdom to put the Angolan peace process back on track.

With regard to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia has been actively involved in the search by regional leaders for a lasting and peaceful solution. The leaders of the Southern African Development Community and other regional leaders have done a commendable job in this regard under very difficult circumstances. As the Assembly is well aware, the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. There is no doubt that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, if unresolved, could pose a threat not only to the region, but also to international peace and security. The mediation efforts of SADC and other regional leaders, therefore, deserve the support of the international community, as these efforts are intended to forestall the threat to international peace and security which this crisis poses.

In the same vein, Africa has a responsibility to ensure good governance and respect for human rights in the process of achieving durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. All too often conflicts are in large measure the result of lack of political tolerance, lack of respect for the sanctity of life and lack of inclusiveness in the public administrations in African countries. It is pleasing, however, that many countries in Africa have taken appropriate steps to permit democracy to thrive and

to ensure respect for the rule of law, which are part of the primary conditions for peace and sustainable development.

The Secretary-General in his report has neatly captured the interrelationship between peace and development in Africa. Africa's greatest development challenge is to reduce poverty. The international consensus is that there should be a 50 per cent reduction of poverty among the world's poor by 2015. My country has challenged itself to reduce poverty among 50 per cent of its population by 2004.

While we recognize that development is a supreme national effort, the complementary process of international cooperation is also a vital input. Market access is a key factor in regenerating growth and development in Africa. Developed countries need to resist protectionist tendencies towards African exports, not just to facilitate a qualitative and quantitative expansion of African export trade, but also to facilitate the sustenance of the extensive liberalization that Africa has been painfully undertaking.

The external debts of African countries need to be significantly reduced beyond the internationally agreed 80 per cent relief. Complete write-offs will have to be undertaken for many African countries as well. The international community faces the challenge to provide Africa with a lasting exit from unsustainable debt burdens. The Mauritius Mandate is a welcome step in this direction. We also welcome the recent agreements to liberalize and extend the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative.

After a period of decline, World Bank lending to Africa is recovering. Since much of Africa depends on concessional borrowing, early agreement on the twelfth replenishment of the International Development Association is vital. We fully support the view that this should be achieved before the end of this year. Official development assistance in general has been declining for the past five years. This trend needs to be reversed with a sense of urgency.

Capacity-building in economic management is a vital part of promoting African development. Technical assistance programmes should give a major emphasis in this area. African development will continue with a dynamism of its own if the local capacity to manage African economies is established and sustained.

For its part, Africa is proceeding with numerous initiatives to promote development in such areas as democratization, economic liberalization and the promotion of economic integration. However, situations such as those obtaining in Lesotho, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other parts of Africa will always cruelly remind us that the greatest internal impediments to African development are conflicts. The interplay of peace-building and prosperity should go a long way in removing conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): The Japanese delegation heartily welcomes this meeting of the General Assembly convened to address the problems confronting Africa. Considering that Africa embraces more than a quarter of the Member States of the United Nations and accounts for about 13 per cent of the world's population, there is no doubt that global peace and prosperity will not be ensured in the twenty-first century unless peace and prosperity also prevail throughout Africa. Addressing African problems is thus an urgent task, not only for the countries and peoples of that continent, but also for the international community as a whole, and especially for the United Nations, the world's sole truly universal organization.

Although it is on the problems of Africa that we are focusing our attention today, I would like to stress that, based on the progress Africa has made in the political, economic and social areas, my Government believes that the outlook for the continent is positive. Indeed, in many African countries, remarkable progress has been recorded in terms of democratization, economic reforms and social development. Approximately 20 African countries have now attained an annual economic growth rate of more than 5 per cent. Also encouraging is the regional cooperation that is flourishing among those States, thanks in no small part to the efforts of regional and subregional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity. These achievements, together with the amply demonstrated intention of many African States to enhance and continue the current positive trend, augur well for Africa's bright future.

Nevertheless, as the report of the Secretary-General clearly states, there remains much work to be done, by African States themselves and by the international community, in order to sustain the current positive trend and to prevent any crises that could jeopardize the achievements that have been attained so far. The fundamental message conveyed in the report of the Secretary-General is simple and clear: We must address the root causes of the problems besetting Africa. This will require a comprehensive approach that encompasses

activities for the maintenance of peace and security as well as those for the promotion of economic and social development.

My country fully subscribes to this message. As a matter of fact, Japan has been vigorously advocating the need for a comprehensive approach. In the development field, for example, it is calling for a new development strategy, a concept it introduced at the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD I) in 1993. In subsequent efforts to implement this new development strategy, it convened two Asia-Africa forums — in Bandung in 1994 and in Bangkok in 1997 — and it has promoted cooperation between African countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso, as well as between donor countries.

Along with these efforts in the field of development, Japan has been promoting the concept of conflict prevention, and in January this year it hosted the Tokyo International Conference on Preventive Strategy. This Conference underlined the importance of developing a conceptual framework for a preventive strategy encompassing the United Nations, regional organizations, Member States and civil society. It recommended a series of measures which the United Nations and regional organizations might take immediately, including those relating to the enhancement of Africa's preventive capacity, especially the early warning capability, and the effective monitoring of the accumulation and transfer of small arms to conflict areas.

Building upon these efforts, later this month Japan will host TICAD II, in which high-level representatives, including heads of State, from more than 80 countries and organizations, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, are expected to participate. It is anticipated that the Conference will adopt an agenda for action identifying critical development issues in Africa, articulating the goals and objectives of efforts to address those issues and encouraging the international community to mobilize in order to achieve those goals. This agenda for action will underscore the importance of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction in restoring stability throughout society, which is a prerequisite for development.

Japan hopes that, in taking these and other initiatives, it will play a role as catalyst in the actual implementation of this comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing problems of conflict and development.

We are all familiar with the actions which the Security Council has taken, as well as those that it intends to take, in responding to the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. At its ministerial meeting on 24 September, the Council confirmed its determination to continue to address the various problems confronting Africa. As a non-permanent member of the Council, Japan has been taking active part in that work. In particular, my Government is determined to achieve practical results through its role as coordinator of the working group on stemming illicit flows of arms to and in Africa.

Clearly, however, the Security Council alone cannot respond adequately to the problems of Africa. It was the recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to African problems that prompted the Security Council to request the Secretary-General to prepare for it a report that would also be presented to the General Assembly; and indeed, the numerous recommendations put forward in the report extend far beyond the competence of the Security Council. Thus, as the Council embarked upon a concrete course of action to respond to those recommendations relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, it called upon other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, to urgently consider taking action to follow up those recommendations that relate to their respective areas of endeavour.

On this occasion, the Government of Japan strongly urges the General Assembly to respond immediately to this call for action by the Security Council. Indeed, it is incumbent upon the General Assembly, in close coordination with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, to thoroughly consider the Secretary-General's recommendations and take concrete actions aimed at achieving durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Japan is determined to contribute to this process in cooperation with other like minded countries. The degree to which we are successful in addressing the problems of Africa now will be an important factor in determining the well being of the world as a whole in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): At the close of the general debate last week, the President of the General Assembly pointed out that the need to address the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa was a subject raised almost unanimously by the international community. This is an opportunity to

consider this issue in depth and to broaden a discussion that has already been taken up in the Security Council.

Indeed, twice this year Brazil has expressed its views in this matter. The first time was on 24 April, when the Security Council discussed the thought-provoking report prepared by the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Subsequently, on 24 September, at the ministerial meeting of that body, the Minister for Foreign Relations of Brazil, Ambassador Luiz Felipe Lampreia, extensively covered the subject of our discussion. On both occasions, Brazil underlined the need for the establishment of procedures that would ensure adequate intergovernmental coordination within the United Nations system to deal with conflict prevention and transition from peacekeeping to reconstruction.

My delegation is particularly interested in looking at ways to implement Article 65 of the Charter, which allows the Economic and Social Council to provide information to and assist the Security Council, as the Secretary-General reminds us in his report on the work of the Organization. The General Assembly is in fact empowered to give guidance to both the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to devise more efficient ways to increase coordination in the multilateral response to the complex crises that have arisen in Africa.

Africa has historically suffered more than the other regions of our planet. A historian of the continent wrote recently,

> "Africa has been woefully misunderstood and misused by the rest of the world. Humanity simply does not recognize its debts and obligations to Africa."

In the Americas, Africa's influence has been determinant with its significant contribution to the culture and formation of societies.

President Konaré of Mali has offered his vision for the future of Africa, which we share. I should like to quote him:

(*spoke in French*)

> "The future of our continent does not lie in the emergence of ethnic republics, which will only lead us into general anarchy. It is important, we feel, not to deny, much less crush expressions of autonomy. They must be managed politically in a democratic context of the basic transfer of power and the emergence of local power with a view towards regional integration ... [Borders] must be managed as ... joint areas and shared space."

These wise words spoken by an African statesman can be seen as a source of inspiration for Africa and other regions of the world.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has provided us with a focused report. His objective analysis and thoughtful recommendations have led the Security Council to start a process of following up on the recommendations that produced important documents in areas such as the enhancement of international sanctions regimes and the improvement of the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention.

Brazil enthusiastically supported the Secretary-General's proposal for convening a ministerial meeting of the Security Council on Africa on a biennial basis. This will enable the international community, at a high political level, to focus on the problems faced by Africa and cooperate in identifying the necessary solutions. The Security Council, however, is not the most appropriate organ of the United Nation to address the root causes of conflict, which are embedded in deep social and economic factors.

Brazil believes that the General Assembly, with the legitimacy of its almost universal membership, has the moral authority to call the many autonomous subsystems within the domain of the United Nations system to truly respond to the Secretary-General's summoning of political will. In this interdependent world of ours, cooperation and coordination are the key actions to ensure success. A peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa is a crucial element to world stability. It is essential that the Governments here represented coordinate their voices in the various forums so as to harmonize current and future international initiatives on Africa, in order to ensure that their lofty goals may be attained.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Burkina Faso in his capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Allow me first of all to express on behalf of my country, Senegal, our warmest congratulations to the

Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his outstanding report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We have before us a reference document with relevant diagnosis, in-depth analysis and practical suggestions.

We welcome the fact that the report has been submitted to the Security Council, which considered it in an open debate on 24 April 1998, to the General Assembly and to other bodies of the United Nations system, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This is a frank, insightful, comprehensive and forward-looking report.

My delegation is also gratified at the outstanding work under way in the Security Council through which various working bodies have been established on the aspects of the report that fall under the competence of the Council. Moreover, the ministerial meeting of the Security Council of 24 September 1998 was an important landmark in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.

The situation on our continent has been developing very rapidly. In addition to the traditional, or classic, type of conflict, there are now conflicts of a new type — a new generation of conflicts, we could say — that bring in new players and are more complex and politically sensitive because they primarily involve internal contradictions.

The end of East-West antagonism seemed conducive to a qualitative revolution in the geopolitics of threats and in measures to prevent political, economic and social tensions in Africa.

The report of the Secretary-General has appropriately highlighted this new state of affairs, while emphasizing the role of internal and external factors as well as the underlying economic and financial causes of contemporary conflicts in Africa.

Therefore, my delegation attaches great importance to developing an innovative, dynamic and multidisciplinary approach within this framework, simultaneously taking into account the varied sources of conflicts, the nature of the new players and the unprecedented changes that characterize the African political scene. Indeed, the process of democratization in Africa seems also to be accompanied by a process of economic and commercial marginalization and an intensification of impoverishment, despite the colossal efforts made by numerous African countries within the framework of a dual transition to reform their economies and to expand democracy.

Other phenomena should be duly taken into account in the overall analysis, as well as in considering effective solutions to the political and institutional instability in a number of countries of the continent. I shall mention a few.

Large-scale banditry is growing exponentially, and its destabilizing activities are facilitated by, *inter alia*, illicit flows of arms, in particular small arms, and by the porous nature of borders between States.

Another phenomenon is the political struggles, sometimes violent, between opposition and ruling parties, carried out by third-party militias, in contravention of the rules of democracy and constitutional law. Such struggles in some cases lead to military *coups d'état* against democratically elected regimes.

There are also the mutinies of factions of the armed forces that occur when demands for material needs or salary turn into political demands, leading to *coups d'état* or attempted *coups d'état*.

Another problem is the "ethnicization" of political and social life and the resurgence of identity conflicts, particularly in desert or mountainous zones, resulting, for example, from land ownership problems or the emergence of ruptures in ethnic or regional balances in the distribution of competences and national wealth.

In addition, there are objective constraints arising from the difficulty certain countries have in controlling ethnic armed bands in the refugee camps.

Last but not least, the reviews being conducted by certain countries of their policies on borders and neighbouring countries call into question the principle laid down by the OAU bearing on the *uti possidetis juris* — the inviolability of borders inherited from colonialism.

This list cannot be exhaustive because the variables that explain the causes of conflict are many and complex. This complexity brings us to the crucial point of the necessity of adopting of mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of crises in Africa.

At the pan-African level, the OAU has dedicated itself to this difficult and complex task since 1992 through its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention,

Management and Resolution. Its action and initiatives should be further supported by the United Nations and by the entire international community, whose contribution to the OAU Peace Fund is very much to be desired.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other subregional organizations, is also developing its own subregional mechanisms. In July 1998, in Banjul, Gambia, the Ministers of Defence, the Interior and Security adopted an important document bearing on the creation of a mechanism for prevention, management and settlement of conflicts, as well as for maintaining peace and security in West Africa. This mechanism provides for the establishment of an observer group, a council of mediation and security and a council of sages. ECOWAS, through its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), is henceforth empowered to intervene in each of its 16 member States when the situation prevailing in any one of them entails serious risk of humanitarian disaster, threatens the peace and security of the subregion or constitutes an overthrow or an attempted overthrow of a democratically elected regime.

My delegation believes that strengthening, expanding and honing the mechanisms for concerted action and consultation between the OAU and the United Nations are of the utmost importance, in the aim of strengthening the African capacity in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and consolidation of peace. This final aspect — the consolidation of peace — deserves to be further taken into consideration, for beyond its political dimension, the consolidation of peace implies, above all, economic, financial and humanitarian assistance for reconstruction and for reintegration into the social fabric of the fighters, refugees and other displaced persons.

Naturally, the effectiveness of the machinery established depends on the political will of Governments. My country, Senegal, which has made a significant contribution to the establishment of the OAU and ECOWAS mechanism, and which even convened in Dakar, in December 1995, an international seminar on preventive diplomacy and the maintenance of peace in Africa, remains more inclined than ever to support efforts in Africa and elsewhere on behalf of peace, stability and security.

My country pays tribute to the efforts of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to assist the African countries in strengthening their ability to prevent conflicts and maintain peace. The initiative undertaken by Japan to hold in Tokyo in January 1998 a conference on preventive strategy in which the situation in Africa was central to the agenda must also be hailed.

It has often been recalled the peace is not merely the absence of war. As His Holiness Pope John Paul II proclaimed, "Development must be the new name of peace". The report of the Secretary-General has the merit of drawing its essential force from the dynamic interaction it wisely establishes between the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa. The General Assembly, in its area of competence, and the other bodies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should today, more than ever, take into account the serious development constraints which Africa is courageously facing.

It must be noted with satisfaction that the World Bank and the funds and programmes of the United Nations system are currently engaged in reorienting their aid measures to better assist the efforts of African Governments with a view to ensuring development, growth and good governance in the continent.

Official development assistance should be strengthened instead of being reduced from year to year. Adjustment programmes should be made more compatible with social tranquillity. New and additional substantive resources should be mobilized. The scope of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, jointly undertaken by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, should be expanded. The question of the African debt should be seriously examined, and acceptable solutions should rapidly be found. The idea of a special conference devoted to the question of African debt is even more relevant today. The machinery of the World Trade Organization should be reconsidered in order better to respond to the interests and concerns of the African countries, which are living in an environment dominated by globalization of the economy.

In sum, the international community, as was suggested several years ago by Senegal's head of State, President Abdou Diouf, should seek to draw up a "Marshall Plan for Africa", for an Africa that needs not only compassion but above all assistance and partnership in a spirit of solidarity and dignity.

Mr. Saad (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today we are considering an issue that is of special importance and great concern to us, due to its close relationship with the effectiveness and activities of the United Nations in meeting its obligations vis-à-vis peace,

security and development, and due to its relationship with the credibility of the various components of the international community as we strive for a world based on solidarity, cooperation and responsiveness to events and developments.

I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, who has provided us with a report that sets out a particular vision of the situation in Africa in all its aspects. It constitutes a basis for understanding and discussing the increase in conflicts in Africa, the suffering of the African people and the obstacles they face in the process of reconstruction and development. While we believe that such a basis is required and necessary, if we are to find practical solutions and establish frameworks and means of implementing and applying solutions on the ground, it is not in itself sufficient and will not be effective unless it is translated into action and leads to a coordinated and common effort by all.

Discussion of Africa and its needs has been slow to start. However, the report of the Secretary-General has been submitted in timely fashion, and we now need to follow it up with serious, determined and timely steps in order to prevent problems from deteriorating, with disastrous or even catastrophic consequences.

The Republic of Yemen pays particular attention to events and developments in the African continent, whether positive or negative, because of its historical and geographic ties with Africa, its relationship with the African people and our common interests that stem from those ties. We in the Republic of Yemen are affected both positively and negatively by events and developments in Africa. There is no clearer proof of how Yemen is affected by these events than the suffering experienced by Yemen as a result of it being a neighbouring country to the Horn of Africa, with its internal conflicts and natural disasters. My country has always tried to help to find solutions to those problems and to overcome the obstacles faced by the countries of the region. The capital of my country, Sana'a, has hosted several meetings between the warring Somali factions in an attempt to put and end to the crisis in Somalia, achieve reconciliation and establish a basis for peace and stability in the country.

The efforts of Yemen and of other countries and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, may not have led to definitive and positive results in Somalia, but we see the light of hope and optimism and believe that further efforts in this field will lead to further cause for hope until the present darkness disappears. We believe that close and coordinated cooperation among the countries neighbouring Somalia, supported by the power, capacities and experience of the United Nations, reinforcing the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other relevant regional and subregional organizations, is very important and necessary if we are to find a solution to the dilemma faced by Somalia. The experience of the United Nations in Somalia may have been one of bitterness and failure, but we must persevere in our efforts and apply still greater efforts so as to achieve results.

The question of Somali refugees is an urgent humanitarian issue. Despite its limited resources, Yemen has opened its ports to receive Somali refugees out of a sense of responsibility and good-neighbourliness. The prolonged crisis in Somalia and the presence of Somali refugees in Yemen represent serious problems for the Government of Yemen. This is in addition to the difficulties faced by the Government with regard to the internal economic and financial situation and the international economic crisis.

We believe that the resources provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are not commensurate with the scale of the problems facing Yemen, which houses these Somali refugees. These resources do not meet the requisite needs of the refugees. The situation and needs of the Somali refugees in Yemen must, therefore, be reviewed and reassessed; we must shoulder our responsibilities for their humanitarian needs.

With regard to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and its effects on the Horn of Africa and the southern entrance to the Red Sea, the Republic of Yemen is gravely concerned by its continuation and the escalation of tensions. We hope that a peaceful solution can be found to that conflict.

The problems and concerns of the African continent require common understanding and close cooperation. We must respond quickly if we are to put an end to the deteriorating situation. My country hopes that that will be achieved on the ground without further delay, as any delay will aggravate the situation and greatly increase the economic, political and humanitarian costs.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): South Africa commends the Secretary-General for his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. This comprehensive report raises issues which are as timely as they are important for us in

Africa. It is significant that the report identifies some of the root causes of Africa's dilemmas, as well as provides guidelines on conflict management and resolution.

Mr. Maidin (Brunei Darussalam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Although Africa's colonial past should not be used as an excuse to justify the current challenges, it is important to take into account the legacy bequeathed to the continent when assessing its prospects for peace and development. Indeed, some of these challenges originated in Africa's colonial partitioning, the arbitrariness of its borders and the setting of one locality against another in line with the old adage of divide and rule. Africa's past therefore sets a context within which some of its current problems should be seen. Nevertheless, our greatest challenge in Africa is to find a solution to our problems in a manner which ensures the continent its rightful place in the community of nations, with our people in control of their own destiny.

We in South Africa believe that success in these endeavours can be measured by the extent to which our people enjoy the right to democratic institutions, transparency in government, governance through constitutionality, the rule of law and full observance of human rights. We consider these norms as basic for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity.

Indeed, in many respects, we in Africa have gone a long way, during this decade in particular, in democratizing our societies. However, for democracy to be sustainable and secured it must be underpinned by economic development, particularly by the need to exercise the right to development because the existence of extreme poverty, hunger, deprivation and lack of access to basic needs contributes to instability and conflict.

It is for this reason that Africa has constantly striven for the establishment of just and equitable economic relations with the developed countries, relations that will help forge a genuine and meaningful partnership in development.

The Secretary-General's report should therefore serve as a basis for beginning a new relationship with Africa for its development. Most countries in Africa still wrestle with external indebtedness and its overhang. This is a severe drain on resources and an absolute brake on development.

Developed countries should, moreover, rethink and reverse the decline in development assistance programmes to make them more effective and capable of delivery to the very people who need this assistance.

Globalization and liberalization have had negative impacts in some respects on powerful, sounder economies. For Africa's economies, the impact of globalization is often devastating. There is therefore an urgent need for concerted international efforts to continue to address this problem in order to mitigate its impact on our fragile economies.

In spite of these challenges to Africa's development, the situation is not one of utter gloom, but one of hope coming from positive economic indicators in some regions. In the Southern African Development Community, for instance, recent economic performance has, overall, been positive. The economic growth rate has ranged between 2 and 8 per cent, and the average growth rate is about 3.8 per cent. The region has also designed national reconstruction and development programmes directed at complementing efforts for regional economic integration.

Sound macroeconomic policies are in place in a number of African countries. However, success in attracting foreign direct investment is still elusive. Supportive international development efforts would therefore be helpful in assisting African economies in the relocation of capital directed at foreign direct investment.

The incidence of military coups in Africa has been a matter of deep concern to the continent and the international community. Coups are unconstitutional and disruptive and lead to much suffering and political and social dislocation.

South Africa is committed to the resolution of conflicts through peaceful means. We believe that if such means are comprehensive and inclusive of all parties to a dispute, that would help secure a lasting political solution.

Africa has the world's largest arsenal of small arms in circulation and continues to be a theatre of conflict and civil strife partly because of the preponderance of illicit transfers of these arms. In a number of our countries the illicit transfer of arms has contributed to increased acts of violence and prolonged conflicts, which undermine the chances for peace agreements and impede national development and reconstruction.

It is for these reasons that South Africa also shares the concern expressed in the report at the proliferation of

arms and supports the proposal for strengthening the international and domestic instruments to synchronize policies against illicit arms-trafficking.

It is indeed important for Member States to participate in the provision of information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to establish supplementary subregional registers.

We also believe that increasing expenditure on armaments should be avoided, as the scarce resources that are spent would be better utilized if targeted for development purposes. Besides, such expenditure may also nurture and engender a culture of armed aggression and military coups.

Conflict prevention requires increased coordinated efforts by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), together with subregional actors, equipped with early warning systems and complemented by effective response mechanisms, to ensure successful peacekeeping deployment.

The provision of adequate resources is vital for effective and successful peacekeeping. The proposal to formulate, through the Security Council, clear criteria with a more predictable basis for determining when to support the deployment of peacekeeping operations should enhance the role of the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping and would ensure that the United Nations deals with conflicts in an effective and decisive manner.

South Africa supports the Secretary-General's plea for contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, as generous contributions to it would lead to the enhancement of Africa's capability to operate in peace missions by providing the necessary means for capacity-building.

The problem of refugees is mind-boggling. In this connection, the practical recommendations regarding refugee assistance are welcome, as such assistance would contribute to enhancing the professionalism of public officials.

The appraisal of humanitarian assistance, of its imperatives and delivery systems and of the link between emergency assistance for reconstruction and development is important. Humanitarian assistance is directed at people in dire situations of want, caused either by natural phenomena or through man-made situations.

South Africa would like to underline the need for all parties, particularly in areas of conflict, to observe internationally accepted standards of conduct and not to hinder such assistance from reaching those for whom it is destined.

At their recent summit in Durban, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement commended the Security Council for establishing a follow-up mechanism to implement within its competence the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report and encouraged the Council to pursue its efforts in this regard. They further recommended that the General Assembly, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other appropriate bodies should also consider the report and follow up its recommendations.

South Africa is committed to contributing in efforts towards the eradication of the causes of conflict and for sustainable development in our continent.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): More than a year ago, under the leadership of the United States, the Security Council held its first ever ministerial meeting on Africa. Our goals were clear: to create a new and lasting partnership between Africa and the international community for resolving conflict, to promote democracy and respect for human rights, and to accelerate the building of political stability and Africa's integration into the global economy. Since then, the Security Council has studied the thoughtful and incisive report of the Secretary-General, prepared at the request of that ministerial meeting. The Council's working group is considering how best the Security Council can take action on those issues that fall within its authority.

Africa offers many examples of the best kind of cooperation between national leaders and the United Nations in achieving a common goal. As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, this cooperation extends far beyond the issues of peace and security that occupy the Security Council. In areas such as development, food security, health, humanitarian aid and electoral assistance, the partnership between Africa and the United Nations has been close and fruitful. The United States is committed to that partnership and will continue to do its part, as we join together in taking on the opportunities and the challenges outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

I am pleased to note that the United States agrees with the findings of the Secretary-General's report. In

fact, recommendations in the report closely mirror the programmes and priorities of the United States Agency for International Development, as well as the initiatives announced by President Clinton in his Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa. The United States is committed to strengthening our relationship with the people of Africa, and we consider United Nations agencies to be among our most important partners in this effort.

When President Clinton travelled to six African nations this past April, he heard first-hand about the efforts and accomplishments of the African people in writing a new chapter in the history of their continent. He met with economic leaders and business people who made clear in no uncertain terms that Africa is open for business. He saw the natural and physical wonders of Africa and heard first-hand how these essential resources are being preserved for future generations. He met with the survivors of Rwanda's genocide as they undertook the tasks of rebuilding and reconciliation. And he talked directly with the African people as they shared with him their dreams and aspirations for the future and for the future of their children.

The United States is heartened by the enormous progress that African nations and African people are making. Just a few years ago, there were only five democracies in Africa. Today, democracy is taking root across Africa, from Botswana and Mozambique to Ghana and Benin. On the economic front, more and more African countries are reaping the benefits of free markets, foreign investment and open economies.

Unfortunately, not all the news is good. From the Eritrean-Ethiopian border to Central and southern Africa, nations that were planting the seeds of peace, good government and sustainable development are tragically returning to the violence and conflict that plagued their nations in the past. Critical opportunities for rebuilding civil society, furthering economic and political development and contributing to regional peace and security are being lost.

The United States is committed to helping resolve these conflicts. Of course, each nation is primarily responsible for creating its own framework for democracy, development and peace. However, we will join with our colleagues in the United Nations to help where we can, not only in the Security Council, but also in the General Assembly and other appropriate United Nations bodies which can play a critical role in resolving conflict.

Along the same lines, the United States believes that regional and subregional organizations have a critical role to play in resolving and preserving stability in Africa. In recent years, the United States has contributed to the crisis-management capability of the Organization of African Unity, as well as to subregional organizations, in support of African efforts to end conflicts in their midst.

In addition, our African Crisis Response Initiative, like similar efforts by France and the United Kingdom, is helping a new generation of African soldiers enhance its peacekeeping capability. We strongly urge the international community to continue to assist Africa's regional and subregional organizations as they work to shape a new destiny for Africa's people that is free of discord and violence.

To be sure, lasting peace and security must go hand in hand with political and economic development and with good governance under the rule of law. As economic opportunity spreads, so too will the prospects for a sustained and lasting peace. Simply put, the cycle of violence must be replaced by a cycle of opportunity.

We share the view of the Secretary-General that the international community must do more to broaden economic opportunities for all Africans. Africa wants and needs the world's trade, investment and economic engagement. And, as a number of African leaders who are opening their markets to investment and trade are discovering, that remains the most successful and abundant path to sustainable development. Today, the United States is Africa's largest single export market, having taken in $16 billion in African goods and services in 1997. Our exports to Africa totalled more than $6 billion in 1997. It is our goal to ensure that these numbers increase in the future.

President Clinton remains committed to working with Congress to restore United States assistance for Africa to its historic levels. The United States also believes that the building of technical capacity is critically important for Africa's development. We remain hopeful that efforts in the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development will help us meet the goal of ensuring that at least 50 per cent of our assistance is spent in Africa. In addition, our Overseas Private Investment Corporation will remain an important element for promoting investment in the emerging markets of Africa.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, there is still a need for international humanitarian assistance for Africa, to help alleviate the devastating effects of conflict. We support the proposal of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance to define a set of common principles for the conditions under which humanitarian assistance will be delivered.

We also agree with the Secretary-General that the international community must do more, through the World Health Organization and other United Nations and international bodies, to stop the spread of infectious disease. For far too many nations in Africa, the proliferation of deadly diseases is causing not only despair for individuals, but economic dislocation for their societies. That is why the United States is working to control the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and dengue fever across the continent.

Africa is rich in natural resources, but its most important resource is its people. President Clinton has long spoken of the critical importance of education to develop human resources as a stepping stone to social development and economic prosperity. That is nowhere more evident than in Africa, where poverty and political instability are keeping too many children away from the classroom. In Africa last April, President Clinton announced the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative, which seeks to improve the quality of African education at all levels, with particular attention to the education of girls.

Of course, if Africa is to truly move forward, it cannot do so with one hand tied behind its back. Unfortunately, the often suffocating debt burdens under which many African countries operate are having exactly that effect. The United States is a strong supporter of comprehensive debt relief, including through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Under this initiative, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral institutions, in conjunction with official creditors, are providing coordinated debt relief to poor countries with unsustainable debt burdens.

The United States agrees with the thrust of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the issue of debt. And we reiterate our call for creditors to follow the example of the World Bank and the Paris Club in providing interim debt relief to support reforms to date, rather than delaying all debt relief until a future completion of an entire reform package.

When President Clinton journeyed to Africa last March he told a crowd of nearly half a million people in Accra, Ghana,

> "One hundred years from now, your grandchildren and mine will look back and say this was the beginning of a new African renaissance."

But that dream will only become a reality if each and every nation gathered here today joins together with the African people in helping to bring peace, stability and development to their continent.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The report of the Secretary-General contains a comprehensive analysis of the sources of conflict situations in Africa, which, by undermining the political and socio-economic stability of entire regions, result in loss of life and human suffering and hamper the fulfilment of African peoples' aspirations for peace and progress. The short- and long-term measures proposed by the Secretary-General aimed at preventing and settling armed conflicts and humanitarian disasters and at strengthening peace and stability on the continent presuppose the use of the entire range of instruments available to the United Nations.

The Security Council is already undertaking concrete steps within the framework of its competence to develop the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The activities of the special Working Group established by the Council, and its subgroups, made it possible to reach agreement on substantive decisions regarding support for regional and subregional initiatives in the areas of conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and enhancing the effectiveness of arms embargoes. The question of enhancing Africa's peacekeeping potential has also been considered.

The Security Council's ministerial-level meeting held on 24 September 1998 gave a preliminary summary of the results of this work. Russia believes that it is important to continue to develop these questions. In addition, there is a need to enhance the specific targeting of sanctions and to agree on specific criteria for the development of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are in favour of developing the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding humanitarian assistance, post-conflict peace-building, good governance and sustainable development.

Whenever an aspect of these recommendations goes beyond the competence of the Security Council, there is

a need for agreed actions by various bodies and agencies of the United Nations system for the practical implementation of the objectives contained in the report. One of the real possibilities for establishing closer ties and coordination between United Nations bodies and the political, social, economic and humanitarian aspects of the problem is to revive the dormant Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations, on cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Without a solid and long-term settlement of conflicts it will not be possible to ensure real access by the countries of Africa to the mainstream of sustainable and dynamic development and their full-fledged integration into the global economy. This will require a comprehensive approach to resolving the problems on the African continent. One of the key components of such a strategy must be the establishment of a system to prevent and settle conflicts and provide a comprehensive solution to problems of post-conflict rehabilitation. Here there will be a need for further joint efforts by both the friends of Africa and Africans themselves to break the vicious circle of insufficient development, social and inter-ethnic problems, political and military instability, conflicts and the breakdown of development programmes.

We highly value the role of the Organization of African Unity in preventing and settling conflicts, providing for sustainable development and solving serious humanitarian problems. We also value the fruitful results of its activities in the area of regional integration and advancement of the African Economic Community.

Russia believes that the responsibility for development and for implementing an effective economic policy lies first and foremost with the countries themselves. At the same time, under globalization it is impossible to do without international cooperation in order to establish favourable conditions for development. This is particularly relevant with regard to African States, many of which cannot independently break the vicious circle of socio-economic problems, regardless of their keen desire to do so.

We support the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General regarding the need for an analysis of means to render technical assistance to the African countries in order to promote the consolidation of their own potential, to take effective measures to reduce the debt burden of the African countries and to provide conditions for access of African products to the markets of other regions.

To resolve the problems of Africa, there is a need to improve coordination between the efforts of donors acting at the bilateral and multilateral levels. There is also a need to coordinate the various initiatives aimed at the development of the African continent, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. In our view, a leading role in such coordination should be played by the relevant intergovernmental and inter-agency machinery of the United Nations.

To resolve the social and economic problems of Africa, the Secretary-General's appeal is now more relevant than ever with regard to the need for a comprehensive approach to the challenges of globalization by taking all factors into account — not only financial and economic ones, but also social, political and cultural ones.

In his autobiography, *A Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela noted that freedom is not only casting off of chains, but also the aspiration to respect the freedom of others. This theme also recurs in the sections of the report of the Secretary-General that are devoted to good governance and securing respect for human rights and the rule of law, which constitute the necessary components for any efforts designed to make peace lasting. Suffice it here to recall the experience of South Africa in overcoming the legacy of apartheid, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the contribution of African delegations to drawing up fundamental international treaties in the sphere of human rights.

We are confident that, through genuine partnership, Africa will be able to redress the past inheritance of injustice and enmity with a culture of human rights.

The Russian Federation greatly values its traditional friendly ties with Africa. We note with great satisfaction the growing role of African States in world affairs and their contribution to international economic integration and to strengthening the universal security system. Russia intends to render all possible assistance to resolve problems on the African continent. Africa has been and remains a focus of our constant attention.

In addition to action within the framework of the United Nations, we are now considering alternatives for expanding our practical participation in strengthening African peacekeeping, above all in such areas as transportation, technical servicing for humanitarian activities and the training of rescuers and personnel involved in peacekeeping operations.

Understanding the concern of many African countries for the problem of uncleared mines, we are ready to render expert assistance on demining.

In addition, we believe that it is advisable to develop and expand our positive experience in multilateral cooperation on the African continent. We believe that a good example of such cooperation could be, in particular, the Russian-Norwegian project for establishing automotive schools. We are open to proposals for other possible joint projects that could make use of Russia's technical and intellectual potential.

As Russian President Boris Yeltsin noted in his message to heads of State or Government and to the peoples and the countries of Africa:

> "For the Russian Federation, close ties with Africa are not only a glorious page of history; this is the reality of today. We are firmly committed to an intensification of interaction with the States of the African continent in the most varied fields — from politics to the economy and culture."

Mr. Akunwafor (Nigeria): I have the honour to speak in my capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of October 1998 and on behalf of member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), made up of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The Group is speaking on this all-important subject, which was introduced into this year's agenda at our collective request. Permit me to express the appreciation of the group of ECOWAS ambassadors at the United Nations to the General Committee for its decision to consider the subject in all its ramifications at this plenary meeting.

At an earlier forum, we had cause to commend the Security Council for its laudable initiative to commission this report, which was submitted to it in April by the Secretary-General. This action on its part to focus attention on the need for a renewed and concerted international effort to promote peace, stability and sustainable economic growth and development is clearly unprecedented.

Candid, insightful and appropriately packaged analyses of the African predicament are not lacking. As a matter of fact, we already have a plethora of that, with supporting figures and statistics. Rather, there has been a shortage of concrete actions to address the socio-economic problems of the continent. We would like to judge the international community by its actions in that direction rather than by its declarations. As African countries embark on the arduous task of building democratic institutions and instituting good governance and economic reforms, the international community should come forward to encourage and support these positive tendencies in a practical manner.

When the Security Council considered their subject last April, it came to the conclusion that the challenges in Africa demanded a comprehensive and coordinated response. On its part, it had set up an open-ended ad hoc working group to review those aspects that touch on the maintenance of international peace and security. The ad hoc working group was expected to come up with specific proposals for concrete action by the Security Council. It had also, at the same time, expressed the hope that other relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and other intergovernmental organizations, should equally consider the subject matter and take appropriate action within their areas of competence.

Economic difficulties are one of the root causes of instability in Africa. It is therefore essential that African countries are assisted to overcome these difficulties. The scale of poverty and misery is intolerably high. The continent deserves all assistance to help it to combat poverty.

Even though the Assembly proclaimed the period from 1997 to 2006 as the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the root causes of poverty must be addressed through concrete action in the core areas of capacity-building, health, food security, the environment, clean water and sanitation, among others. To achieve the goal of eradicating poverty in Africa requires strategies to expedite economic growth in the region as elsewhere. Unfortunately, while many Governments endorse poverty eradication as a primary international goal, they have not always translated this commitment into tangible actions.

For instance, the combined official development assistance of donor countries peaked in the early 1990s and has continued to record a steady decline since then. Official development assistance decreased from 0.34 per cent of donors' gross national product in 1990-1992 to 0.27 per cent in 1993-1995, and has continued to shrink since then. This actual performance contrasts with the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product agreed to at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Only a few countries — the Nordic countries and the Netherlands — have consistently met this 0.7 per cent target.

In spite of the different debt initiatives, the external debt situation of African countries constitutes a serious constraint to the development of the continent. Debt servicing eats away large portions of hard-earned foreign exchange. For most of the countries in the region, the share of Government revenue devoted to debt servicing is larger than the budget for the social sector — education and health combined. Even so, the total debt stock continues to rise owing to the capitalization of accrued interests. Total debt forgiveness needs to be given more serious consideration at this stage to allow the continent to address its developmental agenda in all earnestness. The recent Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should be made more flexible. The six-year period of sustained IMF-approved macroeconomic reforms before eligibility is considered far too long.

At this juncture, the role of the Bretton Woods institutions as catalysts for the socio-economic development of the continent becomes crucial. They need to understand the efficacy of "peace-friendly" reform programmes which do not undermine the ability of beneficiary countries to fulfil their basic responsibilities to their people in such areas as health, education and overall welfare.

Other challenges facing the continent include the adverse effects of liberalization and the globalization of the world economy and its marginalization of our weak economies, and the unequal terms of trade which place our countries at a disadvantage, to mention just a few. The African Group will introduce a draft resolution before the Assembly that, we hope, will address the issues from the economic and social perspectives. It is our desire to enter the next millennium as equal partners and free agents. We expect our development partners to commit themselves this time around to the attainment of the goal of eliminating the causes of conflict in Africa and promoting sustainable peace and economic growth on the continent. If we can together muster the necessary political will to act, then we are sure to leave a positive legacy of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has the opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's report on causes of conflict and promotion of peace and development in Africa. With a number of armed conflicts dominating the political scene in several regions of Africa, it is of crucial importance that the international community, together with the African countries, discuss ways and means to confront the challenges. This regards not only the field of economic growth and development, good governance, democracy and human rights, but also, and not least, security and conflict prevention.

A correct analysis of the current complex situation in a number of countries and regions in Africa is essential if our discussion is to result in specific action. We believe the Secretary-General's report is well founded and provides us with tools with which we can address some of the primary challenges facing a majority of the African population. We are pleased to see that since its publication in April this year, a number of recommendations have been followed up by the Security Council. We also note with satisfaction the follow-up activities that have been initiated by the United Nations Secretariat.

In our view the simple word "will" is a key word in the report. Norway fully agrees with the Secretary-General when he emphasizes the importance of having the political will to address the many challenges facing Africa. We believe that this political will must be manifested both by the African countries — whose leaders must put the interests of their own people first — and by the international community, through the creation of an international economic environment conducive to Africa's development aspirations.

It is imperative to bear in mind the linkage between sustainable economic growth and development, on the one hand, and political stability, good governance and democracy on the other. During recent years we have seen signs of positive and promising economic development trends in most African countries. We have, however, also witnessed severe setbacks. The continent as a whole still lags behind the target of 6 per cent growth in gross national product per year set by the United Nations in the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In addition, the financial crises that originated in Asia are having serious repercussions in

Africa, such as lower commodity prices and the lack of dynamic markets.

Africa's share of global trade has been reduced during the last decade. When goods and capital are bought and sold with the push of a button, national borders and regulations in many countries lose their previous role. It is therefore crucial to integrate African economies into the global trading regime and to work for more just terms of trade on behalf of the poor countries. Norway contributes substantially in this effort, both bilaterally and multilaterally, through the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other appropriate agencies.

One of the main obstacles to economic and social development in Africa is the debt burden. Norway has recently launched a comprehensive national debt-relief strategy. The aim is to reduce the debt burden of 22 of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries, of which 18 are African. The strategy includes concrete proposals on how we can reinforce and further utilize existing multilateral mechanisms. The most important new scheme in the strategy is to provide unilateral debt reductions on a case-by-case basis additional to the reductions made under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative operations.

Norway is concerned about the international trend of reduced official development assistance disbursements. This trend applies in particular to Africa, where foreign direct investment also is low. African countries will for the foreseeable future still be dependent on official development assistance in order to implement their economic and social reform programmes. It is a challenge to us all to counteract the increasing donor fatigue in relation to Africa. It is a regrettable fact that the industrialized countries are increasingly distancing themselves from the agreed United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for development purposes. Norway has been well above this target for decades, and my Government is currently working on a plan to increase Norwegian development assistance to 1 per cent of gross national product in the years ahead. Special emphasis will be on increased cooperation with our African partners, poverty alleviation, improved delivery of social services and debt reduction.

African countries continue to be the main recipients of Norwegian official development assistance. It is my Government's intention to disburse at least half of the total bilateral official development assistance to Africa. The greater part of the multilateral assistance will be channelled through organizations with a major commitment in Africa. The poorest countries will be given priority also by means of earmarked contributions to the multilateral organizations. Development assistance to the least developed countries will receive special attention.

From experience we have seen how short-term humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation have contributed positively in solving conflicts and stabilizing post-conflict situations. However, this kind of aid does little to alleviate the long-term causes of political instability and unrest. Poverty and human suffering rank high among such causes, and the resulting conflicts often induce even more poverty and suffering. It is of the utmost importance that developing countries themselves realize that they must come to grips with the dimensions and causes of poverty in their countries, develop proactive poverty reduction strategies and allocate resources to implement such strategies. In today's adverse economic climate, demonstrating the will to fight poverty and to achieve sustainable development is perhaps the only kind of attitude that can inspire donors to come up with more aid.

There can be no economic development without human development. An integrated and inalienable part of human development is respect for all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. The human rights aspect has played, and will continue to play, an important role in Norwegian development assistance. Norway therefore welcomes the increased awareness of human rights aspects shown by its partner countries in Africa. Norwegian development assistance has in part been directed towards assisting African countries to fulfil the obligations undertaken in this field.

A vital part of economic development is active participation and, through this, ownership by the people. In order to achieve such participation, people need relevant information. An environment of open debate must be promoted. It is the responsibility of the authorities in any country to safeguard human rights for its population. Respect for human rights is a prerequisite for social and economic development, and studies conclude that economic development projects are more successful where civil and political rights are respected. This demonstrates that in practice a boundary between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic and social rights on the other hand is artificial. They are in fact mutually reinforcing.

The protection of refugees and internally displaced persons forced to leave their homes because of conflicts must remain a priority for the international community at large. The critical situation for internally displaced persons in several African countries illustrates the need for protection. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has expressed deep concern about the violations of the principle of protection that have occurred in the Great Lakes and other regions. We share this concern, and we would like to see a firm commitment on the part of the countries concerned to the implementation of these international principles.

The Regional Ministerial Meeting on Refugee Issues, co-chaired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) that took place in Kampala in May this year focused on the need to reconcile protection principles with the legitimate concern for State security. We regard this as a positive initiative, and we hope the discussions and follow-up efforts will bring progress in this undertaking. Indeed, we need a stronger partnership between the United Nations, the OAU and subregional bodies in this area.

There is an urgent need to strengthen political will and the capacity of the international community for conflict prevention and crisis management. This must encompass more than the provision of assistance in situations of forced displacement. What is needed is an improved and innovative, coordinated international approach that would provide a better link between political, military and humanitarian players on the one hand, and relief and development on the other.

A major step to improve the situation for the African peoples and to maintain peace and stability would be to stop the unlawful use and excessive accumulation of small arms. The donor community has an important role to play here in supporting such initiatives from African countries. Support could be provided in a number of areas, from restructuring the national security sector to collection and destruction of small arms. We commend the establishment of a moratorium on small arms for interested West African countries, and we support the Secretary-General in his appeal to all African countries to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Landmines constitute another serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. We urge all Member States of the United Nations to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention. Likewise, we emphasize the need for adequate resources for mine-clearing activities. For its part, Norway has already stated its intention to contribute $120 million over the next five years for this task.

In a situation where Africa is ridden by conflicts, old and new, it is also the time to focus on the responsibility and will of the continent's leaders to make peace and seek reconciliation.

In conclusion, let me repeat that the Secretary-General's report provides us with the analysis and tools we need. Now it is up to all of us, the African countries and donor community alike, to demonstrate the political and economic will to make a difference for the people of Africa.

Mr. Al-Najaar (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I am honoured to extend to Secretary-General Kofi Annan our thanks and appreciation for his report and for the valuable and comprehensive statement he delivered this morning regarding the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. This clearly reflects an objective analysis of the situation in the African continent.

Successive meetings have been held by the Security Council — the latest only a few days ago — at the level of foreign minister, and a large number of delegates participated today in the discussion of this important item. This reflects the collective international concern vis-à-vis the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General. In that report he clarified the external and internal causes leading to the deterioration of African national institutions, the continuing decline of the rates of economic growth, investment and the gross national product. The report also referred to the problems of the accumulation of debt, widespread poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, displacement and epidemics, which have become rampant in large segments of the population of Africa. This is in addition to other threats arising from the hotbeds of tension and the bloody armed conflicts in some areas.

Nonetheless, a relative détente has taken place and has had a limited impact on the situation in this continent in recent years. This was demonstrated in the consolidation of aspects of democracy, reform and sustainable development, and it showed that there is a sincere will, on the part of some of Africa's States and peoples, to emerge from the crises and achieve prosperity and stability. However, most of the areas of Africa do

still suffer from the negative impact of the socio-economic, political and environmental decline, and we can see that the societies of Africa have endured this, increasingly, year in and year out, from the beginning of the 1980s until now.

The United Arab Emirates is profoundly concerned vis-à-vis this sustained African reality because that reality reflects on stability and on regional and international security. Therefore, we consider that containing this situation is a collective responsibility which cannot be undertaken in the absence of regional and international interdependence and solidarity. We also reiterate our support for the proposals in the report that call for the activation of peacekeeping, as well as humanitarian and development assistance programmes and post-conflict peace-building in African areas of hotbeds of tension.

We reiterate the importance of mobilizing local, regional and international efforts for the enhancement and development of African human resources, as well as for the provision of funds for financing and assistance to enable the societies of the African continent to undertake the necessary reform for their developmental structures. We also consider that this common world approach requires for its realization the following priority steps.

First, the warring African factions must summon the necessary political will to implement a ceasefire, stop bloodshed and respond to the peaceful endeavours for reconciliation, be it in the national, bilateral or regional framework, in accordance with the Charter and the rules of international law.

Secondly, the international community must devise and implement a comprehensive and objective programme to curb the flow and transfer of arms to the areas of tension in the African continent.

Thirdly, steps must be taken to enhance and develop the framework for cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as other relevant institutional arrangements. Here, the goal should be the development of a plan of action that is more capable of propelling all the warring African parties towards implementing military disengagement and ceasefire agreements, thus creating a peaceful environment conducive to national reconciliation.

Fourthly, we must devise an international strategy to respond to early warnings that is more effective and developed, and thus capable of preventing crises in Africa.

In conclusion, I should like to state that dealing with and containing the grave challenges which the African continent faces now may be an arduous task, but it is not impossible. Let us therefore firm up the international commitment to providing support and assistance to the countries and peoples of that continent and in order to help it achieve its lofty goals and secure improved integration into the concomitant process of socio-economic globalization.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Despite the geographical distance involved, Chile feels very close to the African continent, the progress of which it has followed since before the onset of the decolonization process, in which the countries of Latin America played a supporting role that I wish to recall.

Indeed, in the Second World War, the nations of Latin America developed a particular sense of what the world could be after the conflict. In those years, the peoples of Asia and Africa were subject to colonial regimes and unable to participate directly in the preparatory negotiations on the text of the United Nations Charter. Their hopes were vested in the commitments that might be given with respect to colonial territories. Latin America assumed that responsibility in anticipated representation of what would become the third world.

More than 50 years have passed since then and over 50 independent African States are now Members of the United Nations. Chile is their friend and in some it has resident diplomatic missions. We must recognize that the United Nations makes it much easier for countries such as ours to maintain relations with those African States in which we do not have resident diplomatic relations and with which we do not have significant cultural and economic ties.

During its membership of the Security Council in 1996 and 1997, Chile witnessed from that organ's perspective a number of tragedies suffered by Africa. The geographical distance between Chile and Africa and the fact that we do not have global or strategic interests in that continent were the very factors that allowed us to play an active and independent role for peace and development there. We recall with pleasure the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on Africa that was held on 25 September 1997. We have had the opportunity to consider the Secretary-General's report, which we value very highly.

If the international community is to be able to use the tools that are best suited to a proper analysis of the conflicts in Africa, it is absolutely necessary to identify the causes at play.

In many cases, the colonial system in Africa lasted less than a century. However, it entirely reshaped the political environment, social structures and economic systems. It is common knowledge that the borders drawn by the colonial Powers often did not correspond to ethnic realities. This is a relevant factor with a significant impact as a source of conflict.

It should be recognized, however, that the countries of Africa which inherited this legacy understood that there was no system capable of offering a political and territorial organization better tailored to African realities. Moreover, there is an understandable aversion among the current independent States to any threat to their territorial unity. That is why there have been few changes in the African geopolitical map since the completion of the decolonization process.

Another important and related element is the cultural imprint of the colonial system on Africa. As a country with a colonial past, we are certain that that system imposed positive and negative models alike on the local populations. Unfortunately, the imposition of such patterns often meant that endogenous elements which might have lent harmony and stability to the social system were discarded or discounted.

In Africa, the traditional political and social organization stresses the group and group solidarity. Often, human relations are dominated by humanitarian considerations unknown in the Western world. We feel it important that African thinking be given real weight on the African political scene so as to allow the ongoing establishment of stable and legitimate democratic Governments based on African humanism and profound respect for the fundamental rights of individuals.

As elected members of the Security Council in 1996 and 1997, we were able to appreciate how Africans themselves were increasingly addressing African problems through various subregional schemes backed by the Organization of African Unity. This very positive phenomenon was supported by the international community. We believe it essential for the United Nations to cooperate adequately with those subregional groupings in handling a conflict.

We pay tribute to the countries of those groups and offer them our fullest support for Africa's activities for Africa. This does not mean that the world should cease to attend to their problems; on the contrary, it should be ready to cooperate along the lines that Africa is laying down.

Chile has been consistently concerned with the humanitarian situation in conflict areas and believes that respect for international humanitarian law is fundamental. In this regard, we deplore the difficulties often encountered by international humanitarian agencies. The disinterested and difficult work of humanitarian workers, be they from the United Nations or the non-governmental organizations, in conflict zones is quite remarkable to all of us.

One of the main concerns of these agencies, first among which is the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is the grave situation of refugees on the African continent. According to UNHCR, approximately 8 million people are either refugees or internally displaced, though less information is available on the latter.

Since the main objective of the humanitarian agencies is to assist persons suffering in conflicts, they are often also the only witnesses to events in the field. It should be noted that these agencies provided us with valuable information for our work in the Security Council, and we take this opportunity to thank them. It is important that this kind of link between the Security Council and the agencies cooperating in humanitarian work in conflict zones in Africa and the rest of the world grow increasingly closer.

I wish to reaffirm to the General Assembly what my delegation reiterated on several occasions in the Security Council. When a conflict ends, a country embarks on a journey that ends when it is able to establish a stable political and security situation. This means that the United Nations system must not disengage from a country or region in which peace, often very fragile, has been achieved. The United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the international community should attach high priority to promoting a country's social and economic development. The Security Council must ensure a fluid and coordinated link between its responsibilities and those of other United Nations development cooperation bodies. This, ultimately, is the only stable source of peace.

With respect to the post-conflict period and in the context of the factors giving rise to conflicts in Africa, I have a final thought that I wish to share. It is good to keep in mind one reality that we have noted in the African continent. Some countries there are demonstrating great economic vitality and thus giving the lie to many pessimists' emphasis on Africa's difficulties in extricating itself from underdevelopment. We should watch these experiments closely and promote them. They could be a model to follow. The international community's sole wish is for human tragedies to give way to social coexistence and economic development and for the Africans themselves to appreciate with genuine optimism the awakening of a new Africa in the coming years.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the General Assembly's debate on the Secretary-General's report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" contained in document A/52/871.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements by the representatives of Burkina Faso, on behalf of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU), and of Namibia, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The report is indicative and provides us with a true picture of the problems Africa is facing. It also addresses recommendations for action by the international community. Since time immemorial Africa has been besieged by multifaceted problems which have created conflicts throughout the continent. Some of these conflicts have proved to be of a huge and complicated nature, thus requiring immense resources from African States themselves to counter the effects they create. Added to these endless crises are new conflicts which clamour equally for our attention, due to their complexity and the grave dangers they pose.

These crises are a test of the strength of the international community, which more often than not must swiftly respond to the plight of the people of Africa. Africa herself has a moral obligation to lead the way forward with the necessary political will, which though often elusive is nonetheless essential to every resolve undertaken to end the crises.

The report sets out a practical set of recommendations for action by the international community. In his own words, the Secretary-General wished the report to form the beginning of a new relationship between the United Nations and Africa. He has in this spirit challenged everyone to create a new beginning that is result-oriented, productive and meaningful.

The number of conflicts on the continent remains high. Conventional conflicts between nation-States have not gone away, as evidenced by those in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. The source of instability is most often internal, but the nature of these crises is such that they spread rapidly by generating and fuelling the movement of displaced persons, arms-trafficking, ethnic strife and foreign interference. This is true with the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The bloody crisis in the Congo has undone progress achieved since President Laurent Kabila's Government was installed. In Angola, the situation has eluded the dreams and hopes raised by the Lusaka Protocol and is poised to drag that country back into a civil war.

On a much more positive note, though, we are encouraged by the developments to promote a peaceful resolution of the various conflicts afflicting the continent. The sustained efforts deployed by African countries in an attempt to contain the crises which erupted in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a clear testimony to Africa's commitment to lasting peace, security and stability. In all these efforts, the OAU has endeavoured to assume its continental responsibility in a spirit of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity between the continental body and African subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as well as SADC. Such an approach is offering real prospects for conflict containment and permanent conflict resolution in Africa. However, these initiatives need to be strengthened and supported at the continental level and internationally in a spirit of future partnership to realize international peace and security.

Regardless of how much effort we put into these crises, the continuing illegal flow of arms is helping to transform many tensions into armed confrontation and to maintain a climate of insecurity. The Security Council must continue to urge those countries that supply these weapons to show restraint and to try to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's arms embargo. It is in this spirit that my delegation welcomes Security Council resolution 1196 (1998), concerning strengthening the

effectiveness of arms embargoes in conflict situations imposed by the Council. Illicit arms flow to and within Africa must come to an end. The international community must come together in a coordinated and concerted manner to find a credible and effective solution to the flow of arms in our continent.

Much needs to be done to provide an environment in which individuals feel protected, civil society is able to flourish, and government carries out its responsibilities effectively and transparently, with adequate institutional mechanisms to ensure accountability. At the same time, guaranteeing fair and impartial enforcement of the law is indispensable for the protection of human rights. In a nutshell, this requires respecting the autonomy, integrity and independence of the judiciary and ensuring fair and impartial law enforcement by the State. Strengthening judicial institutions is another very important area in which the international community can help African countries to promote good governance. Whilst Africa has evidenced all efforts towards democratization, it remains true that such a quest is dependent only upon African nations themselves, which are charged with the responsibility of establishing ideals reflective of the African norms and cultural values.

Democratization gives people a stake in society. It gives people a sense of belonging, it gives people power and, most important of all, it makes them feel that they have a true stake in security. Without that, lasting peace will not be possible and sustainable development will not be realized. Our structures within the country's home-grown system of governance bears clear testimony to this. The Kingdom of Swaziland, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mswati III, is built upon a system of consensus consultation wherein all citizens are free to express their views on how the Kingdom's destiny should be mapped out.

Good governance alone cannot ensure the inflow of investment and economic growth. However, once good governance has been firmly established, it goes without saying that an enabling environment for investment and economic growth must follow, for no one can be expected to invest in an unstable or insecure neighbourhood. The world economic system is highly competitive and market-based. It is, however, regrettable that Africa has become largely marginalized in recent years in terms of attracting significant inflows of long-term foreign direct investment. If Africa is to participate fully in the global economy, political and economic reforms must be carried out. It is encouraging to note, though, that many Governments are in the process of successfully implementing necessary reforms in the areas of economic deregulation, rationalized structures, adequate infrastructure and predictable policies. As a result, some countries already enjoy stronger growth, and this in itself gives us reason to remain optimistic that the very near future awaiting Africa is bright. We are grateful to our partners in the international community for the initiatives they have put in place for Africa's renaissance.

Closely linked to the question of economic growth and past economic imbalances is the thorny issue of the continent's external indebtedness. The attainment of sustainable development hinges on effective elimination of the bottleneck of external indebtedness. Many States in Africa lack the financial capital needed to address basic expectations and fundamental needs. In 1995 alone, Africa's external debt totalled $328.9 billion. To service this debt, African countries would have to devote their export earnings to donors as well as external commercial lenders.

While Africa cannot avoid its share of responsibility for the present debt predicament, the international community needs to acknowledge its own role in the creation of the problem. During the cold war, bilateral and multilateral loans were often linked mainly to geopolitical priorities, purchasing political peace and stability in areas of interest to the super-Powers or their allies. In this connection, the Kingdom of Swaziland fully supports the efforts of the Organization of African Unity in calling for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock for the poorest countries in Africa within a reasonably short period of time and in the context of Africa's overall economic reforms.

In the recently concluded Security Council ministerial meeting convened by Ms. Hjelm-Wallén, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the international community spelt out in no uncertain terms its renewed commitment to the plight of Africa. My delegation was encouraged to learn that our partners in the developed world are determined to assist in reducing poverty in Africa in order to build peace and prevent conflict as well as to promote African development in general. This is the kind of cooperation that we are looking for. Africa cannot be left behind if the world is to be the global village that we all aspire to.

Finally, my delegation applauds the action taken by the Security Council in ensuring that the continent assumes its rightful position in the international arena, and the steps taken by the Council in its realization that

addressing conflict situations and threats to peace and security without going deep into the root cause of conflicts is an exercise in futility and a waste of the resources amassed by the Organization. My delegation therefore agrees with the Secretary-General's report that Africa — and indeed, Africans themselves — should rise to the challenge, but they must not be left alone to do so. In order to achieve durable peace and prosperity in Africa, we are of the view that there exists a moral imperative, a political, humanitarian and economic necessity on the part of the international community, to respond to the plight of its partners in Africa. The measures that the General Assembly will be adopting during this session must not steer us into a situation of paralysis; the recommendations identified in the report must be critically analysed with a view to their full implementation.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his pragmatic, objective and, indeed, bold report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report sets out a multifaceted and practical set of recommendations for action by the international community.

In his own words, the Secretary-General wishes the report to form the beginning of a new relationship between the United Nations and Africa. He has, in this spirit, challenged us all, both individually and collectively, as organizations or States, to take the cue and seek to create a new beginning that is result-oriented, productive, meaningful and designed to resolve the current unhealthy situation. It is therefore fitting that this item is included on the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

Kenya welcomes the challenge by the Secretary-General in the three broad areas he has highlighted in his report: the need for Africa to rely on political rather than military responses to problems; the need to summon the political will to seriously promote good governance, human rights and democracy; and the necessity of undertaking and adhering to the various reforms necessary to promote sustainable economic growth and stability.

Since the early nineties, African leaders have sought to resolve their conflicts by peaceful means. At the institutional level, the Organization of African Unity established in 1993 the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. That body has enhanced the many regional initiatives under way in seeking to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

In addition, African States have embarked on important steps in instituting far-reaching political reforms. But a lot more remains to be done in order to successfully complete the promotion and enhancement of the process of democratization. This is an important area in which African States must rise to the challenge in order to establish good governance.

At present, Africa is characterized by political conflicts on the one hand and serious economic problems on the other. These two characteristics are invariably interrelated. We take this opportunity to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for highlighting this fundamental truth in his report. In our view, there can be no development without peace, and, conversely, there can be no peace without development.

It is clearly evident that to succeed in building a framework for enduring peace and stability in Africa, the international community must work together with African people. Africa needs support in all fields of its endeavours. In this context, I wish to mention the problem of inadequate assistance for development, which is an indispensable complement to the policies of African States and needs to be made sufficient. Africa's total debt, currently at $350 billion, is also a problem that requires serious international consideration. I also wish to mention the need for increased market access for African exports and the removal of trade barriers.

We therefore call upon the international community to do its share in addressing the causes of conflict in Africa. The United Nations has an important role to play in this regard.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.